

Aide Says U-2 Stand Worst U.S. Diplomacy Error, Ike

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An Eisenhower Administration press official says President Dwight D. Eisenhower's public assumption of responsibility for the U-2 spy flights destroyed one of the greatest opportunities in America's diplomatic history.

Andrew Berding, an assistant secretary of state for public affairs during the final four years of the Eisenhower Administration, severely criticizes U. S. handling of the

May, 1960, U-2 incident in a new book, "Foreign Affairs and You".

Berding's main premise is that by shouldering responsibility for the spy flights over Russia, Mr. Eisenhower lost the grand prize of a visit to the Soviet Union.

Mr. Eisenhower, Berding said, would have been able to conduct a triumphal tour as a combination U. S. President and war hero that no other

President could do in the foreseeable future.

Picturing this as a disastrous turning point in Eisenhower era foreign relations, Berding suggests that if Mr. Eisenhower had kept away from the U-2 affair, as governments traditionally do when

their spies are caught, the President also could have completed his trip to Japan; allies would not have raised serious questions about America's

wisdom; and Republican Richard M. Nixon might have won the 1960 presidential campaign in which U. S. leadership was an issue.

In a chapter entitled "Tragedy at the Top," Berding says advice to Mr. Eisenhower to assume U-2 responsibility came from a combination of State Department and White House Aides. He said press handling of the incident was "a disaster" partly because his